

CLAIMS

Having thus described the preferred embodiments, the invention is now claimed to be:

- 5 1. A carton for carrying a plurality of like-sized objects having at least a portion having a generally circular cross-sectional shape:
- a generally triangular first panel forming a base of the carton, said first panel bounded three sides, wherein each of said three sides is connected to an adjacent side by a rounded corner having a radius of curvature which is
- 10 approximately equal to a radius of curvature of said objects to be carried;
- a generally triangular second panel coextensive with the base panel and spaced apart from the base panel in aligned facing relation;
- a one-piece peripheral sidewall secured to and extending between the first and second panels, said peripheral sidewall having a cross-sectional
- 15 shape coextensive with the first and second panels;
- said peripheral sidewall having three generally planar sides, each of said generally planar sides connected to an adjacent generally planar side through a non-folded corner having a radius of curvature approximately equal to a radius of curvature of the objects to be carried.
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2. The carton of claim 1, wherein the objects to be carried are cylindrical in shape.
3. The carton of claim 1, wherein the objects to be carried are
- 25 beverage containers.
4. The carton of claim 1, wherein the objects to be carried are cans.
5. The carton of claim 1, wherein the objects to be carried are
- 30 selected from beer cans, beer bottles, soft drink cans, and soft drink bottles.

6. The carton of claim 1, further comprising a handle for carrying the container.

5 7. The carton of claim 6, wherein said handle is integral with said peripheral sidewall.

8. The carton of claim 1, wherein the peripheral sidewall includes overlapping first and second ends which are secured together to form a
10 seam.

9. The carton of claim 8, wherein the first and second ends are secured via thermosealing the mutually facing surfaces of said seam.

15 10. The carton of claim 8, wherein the seam is formed along one of said generally planar sides.

11. The carton of claim 8, wherein the seam is formed along one of said non-folded corners.

20 12. The carton of claim 8, wherein one of said first and second ends comprises a handle.

25 13. The carton of claim 12, wherein the handle is integral with the peripheral sidewall.

14. The carton of claim 13, wherein the handle is formed from a single layer of material.

30 15. The carton of claim 13, wherein said handle includes first and second handle panels folded about a fold line therebetween, each of said

first and second panels having first and second apertures, respectively, said first and second apertures being aligned when said first and second panels are folded about said fold line to form a handle opening adapted to receive fingers of a user for carrying the container.

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16. The carton of claim 15, wherein the handle is swingably movable between a first storage position in which the handle lies flat against said peripheral sidewall and a second carrying position in which the handle extends perpendicularly from said sidewall.

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17. The carton of claim 15, further comprising handle reinforcement members foldably moveable between a first position within said apertures and a second position adjacent to and reinforcing said handle.

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18. The carton of claim 1, wherein the first panel and said sidewall are formed of a paperboard material.

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19. The carton of claim 1, wherein said sidewall is formed from a first sheet material having decorative indicia applied to a surface thereof and said first panel is formed from a second sheet material not having a decorative indicia applied to a surface thereof.

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20. The carton of claim 1, wherein said objects to be carried are beverage bottles, each having a cylindrical main body portion depending coaxially from a narrowed neck.

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21. The carton of claim 20, wherein the second panel includes a plurality of openings for receiving said at least a portion of the necks therethrough.

22. The carton of claim 21, wherein the second panel further comprises a plurality of slits extending radially outwardly from said openings and adapted to allow said cylindrical portion of said bottles to pass through the second panel.

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23. The carton of claim 22, wherein said slits are selected from cuts which pass completely through the second panel, cuts which pass partially through the second panel, and perforated lines.

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24. The carton of claim 22, wherein the carton is adapted to hold six beverage bottles.

25. The carton of claim 1, wherein the carton is adapted to hold N number of objects, wherein N is selected from 3, 6, 10, 15, 21, 28, and 36.

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26. The carton of claim 1, wherein the carton is adapted to hold six objects.

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27. The carton of claim 1, wherein the second panel is removably attached to said sidewall.

28. The carton of claim 1, wherein the sidewall further comprises a reinforced rim.

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29. The carton of claim 28, wherein the reinforced rim is selected from a rolled edge of sidewall and a folded edge of said sidewall.

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30. The carton of claim 1, wherein said second panel includes:
a peripheral engaging portion affixed to a rim portion of the sidewall
defined peripherally about an opening provided on the carton; and

a closure portion swingably attached to the peripheral engaging portion, said closure portion movable between a closed position covering said opening and an open position allowing access through said opening.

5 31. The carton of claim 1, wherein said objects are spherical.

 32. The carton of claim 31, wherein said objects are balls.

 33. A carton sidewall blank formed of a sheet of material being
10 cut and scored and adapted to be assembled to define a tubular carton sidewall having generally triangular cross-sectional shape, and further adapted to be combined with at least one separately formed, generally triangular end closure panel to define a generally triangular prismatic carton, the triangular prismatic carton being adapted to carry a plurality of like objects having a generally circular
15 cross-sectional shape, the blank comprising:

 a generally rectangular main portion for forming the tubular sidewall;

 a first fold line parallel to a first edge of the main portion defining a first folding strip along said first edge;

20 a plurality of score lines within said first folding strip running perpendicular to said first and second fold lines;

 said plurality of score lines arranged to facilitate bending said sidewall blank to form said tubular carton sidewall wherein said tubular carton sidewall has three planar sidewall surfaces wherein each planar sidewall surfaces is adjoined to an adjacent planar sidewall surface via a curved sidewall surface having a radius of curvature approximately equal to a radius of curvature of said objects to be carried.
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 34. The blank of claim 33, further comprising a second fold line
30 parallel to a second edge of the main portion opposite said first edge defining a second folding strip along said second edge.

35. The blank of claim 33, further comprising a handle portion integrally formed with said main portion and extending from a third edge of said main portion perpendicular to said first and second edges, said handle portion comprising a handle fold line defining a proximal handle panel and a distal handle panel, each of said distal and proximal handle portions having an aperture formed therein, said apertures spaced so as to be aligned when said distal handle portion is folded along said fold line back onto proximal handle portion, and further wherein said distal handle portion is sized to overlap with said main body portion when said distal handle portion is folded along said fold line back onto proximal handle portion.

36. A method of forming a generally triangular prismatic carton adapted to carry a plurality of like objects having a generally circular cross-sectional shape, the method comprising:

forming sidewall blank from a sheet of material comprising a generally rectangular main portion for forming the tubular sidewall;

scoring a first fold line on the main portion parallel to a first edge of the main portion, the fold line defining a first folding strip along said first edge;

and

scoring a plurality of score lines within said first folding strip running perpendicular to said first and second fold lines;

bending said sidewall blank into a tubular carton sidewall having three planar sidewall surfaces wherein each planar sidewall surfaces is adjoined to an adjacent planar sidewall surface via a curved sidewall surface having a radius of curvature approximately equal to a radius of curvature of said objects to be carried;

said plurality of score lines arranged to facilitate said bending;

closing an end of said tubular carton sidewall by attaching a separately formed, generally triangular panel.